DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 194 228 PS 011 829

AUTHOR Dodge, Diane Trister
TITLE Trainer's Guide to Table Toys: A Creative Curriculum for Early Childhood.
INSTITUTION Creative Associates, Inc., Washington, D.C.
SPONS AGENCY Administration for Children, Youth, and Families (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE 79
CONTRACT 105-78-1003
NOTE 43p.: For other manuals in this series, see PS 011 820-830.
AVAILABLE FROM Creative Associates, Inc., 4419 39th Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20016 ($3.95: complete set of manuals, $47.55)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Early Childhood Education: *Instructional Materials: *Learning Activities: Media Selection: *Parent Education: Play: *Teacher Education: Teaching Guides: *Toys: Workshops
IDENTIFIERS *Blocks: CDA: Child Development Associate

ABSTRACT

This trainer's guide is designed for day care center directors and others responsible for teacher training and parent education who wish to develop and present workshops based on the manual, "Table Toys - A Creative Curriculum for Early Childhood." The guide is divided into six sections, called "sessions," which correspond to the first six chapters in the table toy manual. Each of the six sessions is designed as a complete workshop and includes suggestions on techniques for conveying the information in a workshop setting. Session topics are headed as follows: (1) An Introduction to Table Toys: (2) Arranging Space for Table Toys: (3) Selecting and Displaying Table Toys: (4) Supporting Children Playing with Table Toys: (5) Structuring the Use of Table Toys: and (6) Making Your Own Table Toys. Handouts appended include forms for grouping table toys, for examining homemade and other toys, and a discussion of floor plans. This trainer's guide is not intended to be used alone and is thought to be helpful only when read in conjunction with the Table Toy Manual. (Author/SS)

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TRAINER'S GUIDE TO

TABLE TOYS

A CREATIVE CURRICULUM FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD

by

DIANE TRISTER DODGE

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The Creative Curriculum Series was originally prepared under grant HEW-90-C-438 to "Celebration in Learning '76". It was revised and completed under contract from The Administration for Children, Youth and Families HEW-105-78-1003.

The material presented in this series represents the opinions and viewpoints of the authors and not necessarily those of the funding agency.

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Published by
Creative Associates, Inc.
4419 39th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20016

Distributed by
Gryphon House
P.O. Box 217
Mount Rainer, Maryland 20822

ISBN 0-934362-08-4 (volume 8)
ISBN 0-934362-00-9 (set)

TRAINER'S GUIDE TO TABLE TOYS

Table of Contents

		Page
Introduction		1
How To Use This Guide		4
SESSION I.	AN INTRODUCTION TO TABLE TOYS	7
SESSION II.	ARRANGING SPACE FOR TABLE TOYS	12
SESSION III.	SELECTING AND DISPLAYING TABLE TOYS	16
SESSION IV.	SUPPORTING CHILDREN PLAYING WITH TABLE TOYS	20
SESSION V.	STRUCTURING THE USE OF TABLE TOYS	26
SESSION VI.	MAKING YOUR OWN TABLE TOYS	31

APPENDICES - HANDOUTS

Form For Grouping Table Toys - Session I

Floor Plans - Session II

Form For Examing Table Toys - Session V

Form For Examining Homemade Toys - Session VI

INTRODUCTION

This Trainer's Guide is offered as a supplement to the Table Toy Curriculum Manual. It is designed for center directors and others responsible for teacher training and parent education who wish to develop and present workshops based on the information in the Manual. It is not intended to be used alone and is helpful only when read in conjunction with the Table Toy Manual.

An initial word on workshops is essential at this point. In a workshop format:

- The framework is prepared and set by a leader. The content is brought out through discussions in which all participants share their own feelings and personal experiences. A workshop leader rarely lectures.
- Usually the whole group works together, but smaller groups (two to five people) can be formed if needed to encourage communication. The movement which occurs in the change from large to small groups and back again can help to maintain a high level of interest in the workshop.
- Insofar as possible, every workshop allows for the exploration and use of materials being presented. The participants in a well-structured workshop are almost constantly involved in activities and the discussion flows during and after the experience.

We suggest a workshop approach because we believe that the process of training cannot be separated from the content. How one approaches training and actually implements a training program is part of the training itself. Effective training can be facilitated by:

- encouraging participation. Trainees learn by doing, discovering ideas for themselves, and being actively involved with the materials.
- basing the training on participants' needs. Participants are asked to state their concerns and needs on the particular topic and the trainer continually relates the content to these concerns.
- drawing on the participants' backgrounds. Training is made meaningful by drawing on the personal experiences and observations of the participants.
- setting forth specific goals and objectives which are clearly stated and understood by all. The content is continually related to these goals.
- emphasizing skills not right answers. There are many ways to reach the same goals and learning is a continual process for everyone.
- valuing the contributions and struggles of each person.

The workshop approach provides an opportunity for the trainer to model the role of the teacher in the classroom. This involves:

- preparing the materials and displaying them attractively

- providing a structure for the activities within which participants can freely explore and make their own discoveries
- pulling together the ideas and observations of participants
- interacting with participants in the workshop as you hope they will work with children in the classroom.

WHY USE A WORKSHOP FORMAT TO PRESENT TABLE TOYS?

Table toys appear quite simple and straight forward. For example, it is obvious that children can build with colored inch cubes or sort them by color.

Yet exploring the same colored inch cubes in a workshop setting can facilitate bringing out additional aspects of using them in the classroom:

- following and creating patterns from simple to complex -- an important pre-reading skill
- number games
- ways of encouraging free exploration
- things to say to children using the cubes
- ways of storing and displaying the cubes in the classroom.

One of the best ways to draw out these ideas is the workshop setting which allows participants to experience the fun of exploring and discovering for themselves and the benefits of

sharing ideas with others. A workshop setting is ideal for hands-on experiences with physical objects and for exchanges based on these experiences.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

The Trainer's Guide is divided into six sections, called "sessions" which correspond to the six chapters in the Table Toy Curriculum Manual. Each of the six is designed to make up an entire workshop. It is also possible to combine topics covered in several chapters. For example, Chapters II and III in the Manual on organizing the space, selecting and displaying table toys can be covered in a single workshop. Chapters IV and V, which both emphasize the teachers' role in structuring the activities and interacting with children can also be combined into a single workshop.

If you are conducting a series of workshops with the same people, you may wish to base your choice of chapters on the specific concerns and interests of your group. You can do this at the beginning of the first session using some of the suggestions in this Trainer's Guide. If, on the other hand, you are a frequent visitor to the classrooms of the teachers in your workshop, you may already be familiar with the problems that exist. You might ask yourself a few questions:

- How do the classrooms look?
- Is there a clearly defined area for table toys?
- Are the toys displayed attractively?
- Do the children know where to find and return the toys they want?
- Are the table toys used by the children or do they seem bored with them?
- Do the teachers interact with the children in the Table Toy Area?
- Is there enough for the children to do?
- Are the toys in good repair or are pieces scattered or lost?

Your own assessment of the training needs plus the feedback you receive in the workshop itself, will help you to select the topics that are most relevant for your group.

Another way to select topics for workshops is to refer to the list of CDA competencies, specifically those behaviors related to the Table Toy Area. The topics covered in the Manual are designed to help teachers develop these competencies.

Once you nave decided on the content you wish to cover, the Trainer's Guide offers suggestions on techniques for conveying the information in a workshop setting. We want to stress that these are suggestions. We do not mean to imply that they are the only valid way of conducting a workshop. Each person using the Guide is encouraged to develop his or her own best

ways of presenting the material. This may vary depending on the individual trainer, the goals you have established, the setting and the cultural background and learning styles of the participants. For example, some cultural groups feel most comfortable with a more direct approach to learning and would not be at ease in the brainstorming or role-playing activities described in this Trainer's Guide.

A final word of introduction. We cannot emphasize enough the importance of taking the time to plan your workshop thoroughly. This Guide is intended to help in that effort. Though careful planning may prove to be time consuming, it invariably multiplies the value of the workshop to the participants and increases the rewards for you as the trainer.

SESSION I

AN INTRODUCTION TO TABLE TOYS

The main purpose of this session is to help participants develop a working definition of table toys: what is a table toy, what skills and concepts can be learned and how we can categorize these toys. Having achieved this goal, you can then explore what problems, concerns and interests the participants in your group want to cover in the workshops.

I-1. What is a table toy?

Adults undoubtedly come to the workshop with their own definition of "table toys." Their ideas can provide a good starting place. You might ask the question in the Manual:

> *"If you think about the phrase 'table toys' what comes to your mind?"*

Write down the words the group associates with table toys. You will probably be adding to this list as you come up with a more complete definition during the workshop.

One way to help a group define table toys is to put out a selection of toys in the middle of the workshop area -- either on a

large table or on the floor. The list on page 4 of the Table Toy Manual can serve as a guide to help you select toys to display. In addition, you can include some of the following:

small cars	stuffed animals
wooden or rubber people/animals	crayons
push-pull toys	button and zipper boards
books	crib toys

Sometimes it is easier to first identify what is <u>not</u> in the category one is trying to define. Therefore, you might begin by saying to participants:

> *"Take a good look at the toys we have here. If you see a toy you would <u>not</u> consider a table toy, please pick it up."*

After several items have been removed, ask people to share what they selected and why they would not consider it a table toy. Many of the reasons are obvious: i.e. crayons belong in the Art Area, push and pull toys are for toddlers to encourage walking. Other toys might be removed from the category of table toys because of the age of the children: Lincoln Logs and Tinker Toys are best for older children, not for two-year-olds.

The toys which remain will provide a good selection of typical table toys and should be helpful in forming a definition.

> *"Let's think about the toys we have said <u>could</u> be found in a Table Toy Area. What makes them a table toy?"*

Participants may suggest that table toys:

- develop small muscles
- may be used on a table
- are usually a quiet activity
- can be used by a child alone or with other children
- develop skills in problem solving
- promote eye-hand coordination
- teach specific concepts
  - -- color
  - -- number
  - -- size
  - -- shape
- have a defined task
- provide independent, successful experiences.

I-2. Grouping table toys.

If you wish to have the teachers begin to explore table toys in greater depth, the form for "Grouping Table Toys" in the Appendix to this Guide provides a useful framework for such exploration. You might ask participants to work with a partner and choose one table toy to examine. After distributing copies of the form, choose one toy yourself and demonstrate how you would respond to each of the questions on the list. There may be some confusion about the terms "self-correcting," "open-ended," "construction," and "patterns." It is important to define these terms with examples.

Allow about 15 minutes for participants to respond to the questions about their toy. When you feel everyone is finished, reconvene the large group so that each team can share their ideas.

The previous activity will have given participants a better understanding of the different characteristics of toys you have selected for this workshop. Grouping the toys into many different categories is a good thinking game and can be fun. It is also a useful way to think about table toys when one is selecting which toys to put out in a classroom. For example, you wouldn't want to put out all construction type toys. You might begin by saying:

> *"If you wanted to think about different categories of table toys, what are some ways you could group the ones we have here? As an example, I could set up a group of toys that teach shapes. Which toys would I put in this group?"*

After teachers have selected all the toys that belong in the group you suggested, ask someone to come up with another classification and continue the activity. The three groupings described in the Table Toy Curriculum Manual (p. 6) can be useful in selecting toys. These include:

- age group they are meant for
- concepts they teach
- type of toy (self-correcting, open-ended, construction).

You may want to share these with teachers.

I-3. What children learn from table toys.

After examining the table toys as described in the previous activity, the group will be able to compile a list of the skills and concepts which can be learned.

I-4. Problems with table toys.

It is helpful for the adults in your workshop as well as for you, the trainer, to identify the specific problems and concerns of the group. In this way you can respond specifically to these concerns in the workshops and the participants know that the discussions will be relevant to their particular needs. The list of concerns on page 10 of the Manual are typical of the problems expressed by teachers.

SESSION II

ARRANGING SPACE FOR TABLE TOYS

Children's behavior is profoundly affected by room arrangement and how materials are displayed in the classroom. Many of the difficulties that concern teachers in the Table Toy Area can be improved by good room arrangement. The physical environment can be structured to have a positive effect on behavior problems.

Prior to the workshop, you might want to ask participants to draw a floor plan of their classroom for use in the workshop.

II-1. Behavior which has a negative/positive effect on learning.

The connection between children's behavior and the physical environment is not always apparent to the adults who work with the children. Therefore, a workshop on arranging space may begin by first considering the behavior of children.

If the participants in your workshop feel comfortable about sharing ideas freely, you might just ask them to describe the types of behaviors they like and/or dislike. For many adults, it is less

threatening to talk to one or two people first and then share their ideas in the larger group. Whether you start with small clusters or begin sharing in the large group right away, you can ask the following question:

> *"Think about a specific child you know who you feel is really ready to learn. Describe this child's behavior, especially in the Table Toy Area."*

The same question can be asked about behavior adults do not wish to encourage in children.

II-2. How room arrangement affects behavior -- looking at floor plans.

The floor plans in the Table Toy Curriculum Manual on pages 13 and 14 can serve as a focus for discussion. A separate handout of these floor plans is included in the Appendix to this Guide. It can be duplicated for the participants in your workshop. To emphasize the connection between behavior and room arrangement, you might say:

> *"Consider the first floor plan and the list of behaviors you dislike. What behavior would you expect to see in this room? What are some problems with the way the room is arranged?"*

Next, compare the second floor plan.

> *"What is different about the room arrangement in Plan II? What changes would you expect to see in children's behavior?"*

A sample of a discussion on these floor plans is recorded in the Manual on pages 13 - 15. There are a number of points which are

important to bring out. You may find it helpful to review the material in the Table Toy Curriculum Manual in order to elicit specific ideas in your workshop.

II-3. Setting up a Table Toy Area.

The pictures in the Table Toy Manual can be duplicated and distributed to participants in your workshop as a focus for discussion. You might ask questions such as the following to bring out the points mentioned in the Manual.

- Picture 1: *"Do you think children would have trouble concentrating on table toys in this room? Why?"*
- Picture 2: *"This area is partially closed off. Do you think the arrangement is better?"*
- Picture 3: *"How has this Table Toy Area been organized to help children stay involved with a task?"*
- Picture 4: *"What would children be likely to do in this room? What message has the teacher given?"*
- Picture 5: *"What problems might develop if the Table Toy Area is located near the House Corner?"*
- Picture 6: *"What might be some advantages to placing the Table Toy Area near the Book Area?"*
- Picture 7: *"How do you feel about using table toys on the floor? How can you still protect children's work?"*
- Picture 8: *"In what way would rug scraps help children playing on the floor? What else might you use?"*

After reviewing and discussing the pictures, it is important to help the teachers in your workshop to relate the information to their own

classrooms. Dividing into smaller groups, the teachers can consider the floor plans of their own rooms.

"Looking at your floor plans, do you see any problems?"

"What changes would you like to make"

One of the most effective ways to teach room arrangement is to actually rearrange a classroom as part of the workshop. Engaging the participants in the process of implementing new ideas reinforces the learning and makes it very concrete.

Afterwards, teachers should be encouraged to implement their ideas for changing their own rooms and to report the results at the next workshop.

If you wish to extend the workshops on room arrangement and the display of materials to the total classroom environment, there is an audio-visual training package entitled "Room Arrangement as a Teaching Strategy" which can be obtained by writing to Creative Associates.

SESSION III

SELECTING AND DISPLAYING TABLE TOYS

This chapter focuses on developing criteria for selecting table toys, displaying them in the classroom, and making some toys more durable. If you will be giving a workshop like this more than once, you might want to consider making your own slides based on the pictures in this chapter and the one before. You will also want to collect the materials for the last part on repairing and preserving toys.

III-1. Guidelines for selecting table toys.

This topic might also be covered in the first workshop after looking at a variety of table toys and grouping them.

Rather than just asking participants to list what criteria they use for selecting table toys you can present the question as a problem situation. Display a variety of table toys at the workshop and ask the participants to:

> *"Pretend that you can purchase only two table toys for your classroom this year. Of all the toys you see here, which ones would you choose. Spend a few minutes really considering the toys before you decide."*

After each person has selected a toy, ask them to explain why and how they made their decision. List the reasons and then ask:

> *"Could this list be used as a set of guidelines for selecting table toys? What other criteria would we want to use in selecting toys for a particular group of children?"*

The suggestions in the Table Toy Curriculum Manual (p.22) can be added to the list your group develops.

III-2. Displaying materials.

The way materials are displayed and organized affects children's behavior as much as the overall room arrangement. To make this connection, you might want to review the list of problem behaviors developed in the previous workshop session. The pictures in the Manual can be reproduced for distribution in your workshop. You might pose questions such as the following:

- Picture 9: *"How would children feel facing a shelf that's cluttered and too tall? What might happen?"*
- Picture 10: *"Would children be more likely to select toys from this shelf?"*
- Picture 11: *"What message do children receive when blocks and table toys are kept on the same shelf? What would you expect to see in this classroom?"*
- Picture 12: *"How do you feel about the arrangement of this shelf?"*
- Picture 13: *"If the shelves look like this, what message do children receive about clean-up?"*
- Picture 14: *"What do children learn when their toys are broken or have missing pieces?"*

- Picture 15: *"What are some advantages to displaying toys on low shelves? Here is an example of an inexpensive way to make shelves -- tri-wall. What other materials are available for making shelves inexpensively?"*

- Picture 16: *"How would children react to a shelf arranged like this one? Would they know exactly where to return each toy?"*

- Picture 17: *"How would the use of labels on this table toy shelf help children clean up? What skills would they be learning?"*

- Picture 18: *The narrative in the Manual is very descriptive and informative.* You may want to read it and discuss various ways to make labels.

- Picture 19: *"What problems might you encounter by keeping toys in boxes?"*

- Picture 20: *"What is wrong with just emptying the contents of boxes on the shelf?"*

- Picture 21: *"Plastic bins are one solution. What else might be used for storing individual toys?"*

After discussing the pictures teachers often want to make some of the items for their classrooms. Labels, for example, can be made during the workshop if you provide cardboard, magic markers, construction paper, scissors, catalogues, and clear adhesive backed paper.

It is interesting to refer back to the list of problem behaviors and ask:

> *"What ideas did you learn from the slides that might help overcome some of the difficulties you have encountered in the Table Toy Area?"*

III-3. Caring for table toys.

The suggestions for repairing puzzles with missing pieces and making cardboard games more durable are usually enthusiastically received by teachers who would appreciate an opportunity to make the repairs in a workshop. If you encourage participants to bring in puzzles with missing pieces and cardboard games, the toys can be repaired as you discuss this topic. Materials you will need are:

- clear adhesive backed paper
- scissors
- plastic wrap
- wood putty and/or plaster of paris.

SESSION IV

SUPPORTING CHILDREN PLAYING WITH TABLE TOYS

Table toys are often considered a self-sufficient area of the classroom where children can work quietly and independently. For this reason, teachers tend to spend more time supervising block building or art activities leaving children on their own with table toys. Yet the teachers' role in structuring experiences and interacting with children is extremely important, especially in the beginning of the year. The main goal of this workshop is to help teachers and parents feel more comfortable about their role in structuring successful experiences with table toys.

In preparing for the workshop, you may want to make the planning board described in the Manual. In addition, a sample of table toys such as those described on page 4 should be available as a focus for discussions and for some hands-on experiences.

To introduce the topics to be covered in this workshop it would be appropriate to ask the teachers how they see their role in the Table Toy Area, or how parents use toys with their own children.

You might say:

> *"Close your eyes for a few minutes and think about how many times you have entered the Table Toy Area in the past few weeks. What exactly have you done either to prepare for activities in this area or to work with the children? As you recall your actions, write them down on a piece of paper. Take about three minutes to do this."*

When the group seems finished, ask them to share what they have written. You will want to record this on a blackboard or chart. Much of what is said will probably be covered by the topics in this chapter or those in Chapter V. It is important to outline for the group when you plan to cover each topic.

IV-1. Setting rules.

One way to avoid problems is to be clear about the rules one has for using table toys, and to enforce them consistently. The participants in your workshop will undoubtedly have rules related to the use of table toys. Therefore, begin by asking for their ideas.

> *"Do you think it is important to have rules for children using table toys?"*
>
> *"What rules do you already have?"*

After making a list of rules, you might ask:

> *"How many rules can children remember?"*
>
> *"How do you help children learn these rules?"*

The group as a whole can examine the list of rules and decide which ones are most important. The list in the Manual may provide a helpful comparison. Enforcement of rules, especially ways to make it

easier for children to follow rules, are related topics which would naturally follow from this first discussion. You can refer back to Chapters II and III for ideas on how room arrangement and the display of materials can help children locate and return toys to their proper places. Other ways to help children abide by rules are included in following discussions.

IV-2. Planning boards.

The best way to explain the use of planning boards is to make one before the workshop. Adults attending the workshop are more likely to pick up ideas when they actually see how they can be made. The discussion about planning boards as a way of limiting the number of children in an area and helping children make choices can be presented at the same time. (See Section IV-2 in the Manual.)

IV-3. Helping children who are using toys for the first time.

The participants in your workshop will probably have a number of ideas for helping children who are unfamiliar with table toys. The suggestions in the Manual can be added to this discussion if appropriate.

IV-4. Providing encouragement and teaching skills.

As adults, we can look at a toy such as a puzzle or a stacking ring and quickly see how to put it together. A young child who has not played with a toy before may need help. One way adults can help children is by teaching the task in very specific, sequenced steps.

Here is an exercise which is fun and which illustrates how to break down a complex task into a series of simple steps. Ask everyone who is wearing shoes that tie to pair up with a partner whose shoes do not tie. (If you do not have an even number of people in each category, they can pretend.) The second person becomes the "teacher" who must teach the first person to tie his/her shoes by explaining the task in a sequence of simple steps. You might ask each team to write down the steps and then compare to see which explanations were easy to follow, clear and explicit.

We can look at the skills involved in completing a table toy in the same way. The Manual describes how to break down the steps in using a puzzle. You could ask participants to form teams and select one toy to work on together. They must decide how they would teach a child, step by step, to use the toy. Allow about fifteen minutes for this activity. Then each team can share with the group the toy and the steps they have identified.

IV-5. Talking with children.

It is often difficult to know what to say to children engaged in table toy play to show you have really noticed what they are doing. Because it is so important for adults to talk with children, it is worth spending time on this subject.

A simple role play can be an effective way to convey the information. Ask for several volunteers to play with some of the toys you have set out. You will be playing the role of the classroom teacher making comments on their work. To some of the "children," simply praise them.

"That's a good job, Sandy."

"What a nice design."

"Very good work." etc.

With others, comment specifically on what you see them doing. Include comments which point out concepts they are exploring such as the following:

"I notice you put all the circles in one pile and all the squares in another."

"You made a building of red cubes."

"You found a special way to put in the pegs today. Your design goes red-yellow-green; red-yellow-green."

After this role play ask the participants to react to the different kinds of comments. How did they feel? As a follow-up, you might

take one toy at a time and have the group brainstorm some descriptive comments they could make while a child was playing with the toy.

(See the discussion in Section IV-5 of the Manual for other suggestions.)

SESSION V

STRUCTURING THE USE OF TABLE TOYS

In this chapter, we explore six basic and versatile table toys. The value of presenting this material in a workshop is that teachers and parents can, through first hand experience, become familiar with the toys and learn new ideas for extending their use.

Preparation for this workshop involves collecting the toys you will use and becoming very familiar with the games described in the Manual, Section V-3, "Introducing New Ways to Use Toys." You will probably want to make or otherwise obtain some of the items connected with these games:

- a small bag you can't see through
- a basket to hold the toy
- a set of margarine tubs in basic colors -- red, green, yellow, blue, orange
- a spinner -- (described on page 48)
- a 3-dimensional pattern card -- (page 50)
- paper shapes to match the colors and shapes of at least one toy (i.e., beads)
- commercially available pattern cards (optional).

Each of the toys covered in this Session are described in the Table Toy Manual under the following headings:

- Special Features
- Free Exploration Time
- Vocabulary Building
- Enrichment Activities.

The Form For Examining Table Toys is included in the Appendix of this Guide. It can be duplicated for the participants in your workshop and used as a structure for examining each of the toys.

The major portion of the workshop involves participants working individually or in teams to examine one toy in depth. To introduce this activity, you select one toy as an example and answer the different questions on the Form For Examining Table Toys. It would be helpful to distribute the form prior to the demonstration so that participants can more easily follow what you are doing.

As an example, you might take the beads and laces which is a toy commonly found in early childhood centers.

> *"What would you say are the special features of this toy?"*
>
> *"What skills or concepts can children learn using this toy?"*

You can record the responses on a large chart or encourage participants to write on their forms.

Children who have not played with a toy before need time to explore it and become familiar with its properties. Free exploration is an important step in using table toys with children.

> *"What are some of the ways children might use these beads and laces on their own?"*
>
> *"What would <u>you</u> do at first?"*
>
> *"Are there some things children might do which you would discourage?"*

After children have had time to explore a toy on their own, there are a number of things adults might say to teach certain concepts.

> *"Can children learn the names of colors on their own or do they need the teacher?"*
>
> *"What other concepts could they learn while playing with beads and laces if an adult sat down and talked to them?"*

Finally, you can introduce the Enrichment Activities: new ideas for extending the use of a toy. On pages 47 through 51 of the Manual we have outlined beginning games, advanced games, and pattern activities which can be played with most of the table toys described in this chapter. You can demonstrate each game to the group.

After introducing this approach to examining the toys, you can ask the participants to select a toy they wish to explore with their partner. Allow at least 20 minutes for this activity. During this time, you can spend a few minutes with each group to add suggestions if necessary. It is important to inform the teams that you will be asking them to present their toy to the rest of the group.

When the group comes together again you will want to be prepared to add ideas for extending the use of the toys after each presentation. If you have time, it would be most effective to make samples of the enrichment games to illustrate the ideas. If you have already made or collected the items to use in connection with beads and laces as described in the first part of this chapter, you will want to add materials for the other toys. These include:

- <u>colored cubes</u>

  construction paper cut outs of the six colors of cubes

  poster board on which to paste patterns

  pattern cards already made up and covered with clear contact paper

- <u>pegs and pegboards</u>

  ditto sheets of an empty pegboard

  magic markers to match the colors of the pegs

- parquetry and pattern blocks

  lotto games based on these blocks design cards

  construction paper shapes to match the real shapes

- unifix cubes

  no special materials needed for these games

- attribute blocks

  lotto games based on these blocks

  red, yellow and blue yarn

  grid pattern on a table or poster board

  four dice made from counting cubes.

We have found that participants often want to make their own enrichment games to take back to their classrooms. If there is not enough time in this workshop for making materials, you may want to plan a special workshop for this purpose.

CHAPTER VI

MAKING YOUR OWN TABLE TOYS

The content of this chapter is most easily covered in two separate workshops: one to explore the materials and discuss their use and a second one for making the toys. Preparation for the first workshop requires considerable planning and work to make samples of the table toys described. Once developed, however, the home-made toys can be used for future workshops as well.

An alternative to this approach would be to make copies of the descriptions of each toy in the Manual and distribute them to the participants. In the workshop you could provide the materials required to make the toys and assist the individuals in making their own samples. Once made, everyone could share ideas on how they might be used in the classroom with children.

VI-1. Why make your own table toys?

To introduce the workshop, you could ask participants to bring in any toys they have made for their classrooms. After these materials have been shared, you might ask:

"Why did you make your own table toys?"

"What are some advantages and disadvantages?"

VI-2. Racism and sexism in table toys.

The messages conveyed by toys are often subtle but powerful. To make this point, display a variety of toys which you feel convey negative or limiting ideas. For example:

- puzzles
  - -- where the roles are sexist
  - -- only white people are pictured
- wooden block accessories -- family and community
  - -- where the mothers are shown either holding a baby or wearing an apron
- lotto games
  - -- where women/girls are shown in stereotyped roles, or
  - -- where only white people are pictured.

Ask teachers to look at these toys and consider what messages they convey to children. It is important to note that the messages are just as powerful to whites and girls as they are to non-whites and boys. There are specific questions you may want to consider in the Manual on page 74.

If possible, provide examples of toys which convey positive images and compare these two groups. Some homemade examples would be appropriate. Many toy catalogues have pictures and descriptions of new materials which are designed to portray more positive images.

In addition, you could make available magazines which are good sources for pictures such as Ebony, National Geographic and MS.

Exploring the toys.

One way to inspire a group to make their own toys is to make them aware of the multiple uses of these toys. People can develop this awareness if given time to explore the toys and respond to questions such as those on the handout entitled Form For Examining Homemade Toys (Appendix). Allow some time for participants to look over the homemade toys you have displayed for the workshop before choosing one. If people will be working in teams, ask each team to choose one toy to explore. Allow at least twenty minutes for this activity though the time required should be flexible depending on the group. Some teams will work very independently and others may require additional help from you to get started.

After sharing the toys in the large group, and adding to the ideas presented, you can make plans to collect the necessary materials to make the toys.

Making the toys.

The trainer's role in this type of workshop is to facilitate the actual construction of the toys and to try to ensure good quality

work. One way to do this is to demonstrate how to make each of the toys and to provide good raw materials. As the participants begin to work on their projects, you can help them individually.

APPENDICES - HANDOUTS

FORM FOR GROUPING TABLE TOYS
(SESSION I)

1. What senses does the child use when working with this particular toy? (hearing, seeing, touching, smelling, tasting)

2. Type of toy:

   (a) Is it a "self-correcting, structured" toy? (That is, a toy which fits together in a certain way so the children know when they have finished and when they have done it correctly.)

   (b) Or is it "open-ended?" (That is, a toy that can be put together in many different ways so that each time a child plays with it, something new can be made.)

   (c) If it is open-ended, would it be used mostly for making <u>buildings</u> or for making <u>patterns</u>? What else might it be used for?

3. Which concepts or skills could be learned from this toy? (examples would be: color, shape, number, balance, size, order, same/different, and so on.)

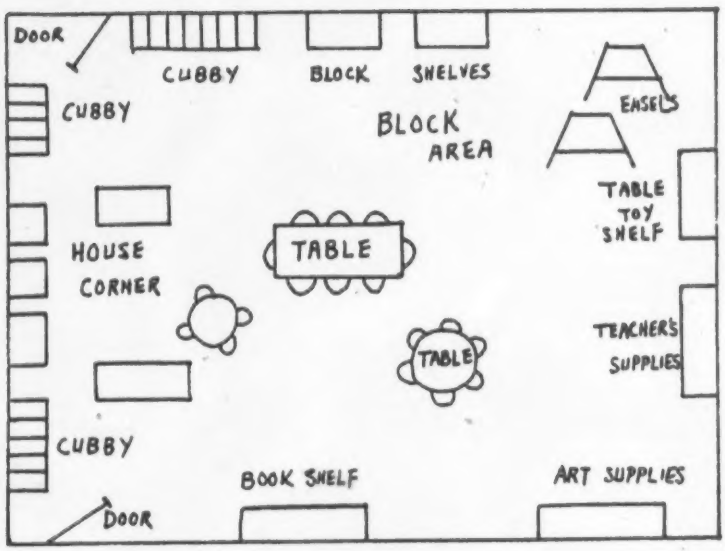
4. What age group do you think this toy would be for?

5. What do you like (dislike) about this toy? What would children like (dislike) about it?

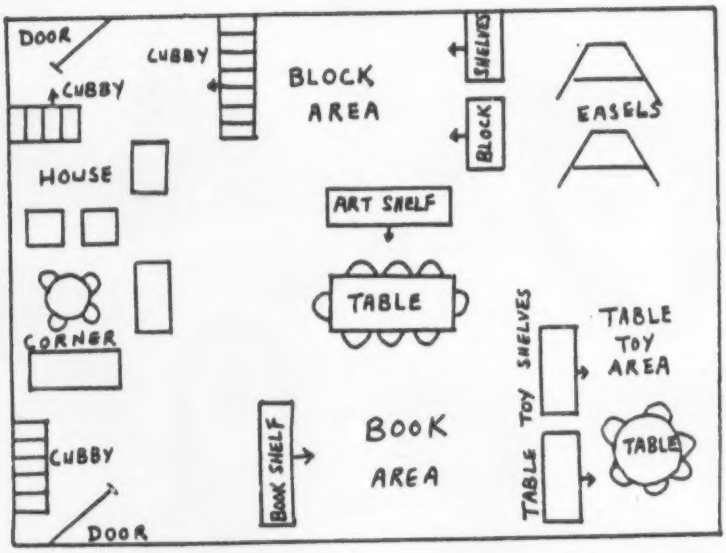
<u>Adults</u>:	<u>Children</u>:
Like:	Like:
Dislike:	Dislike:

ROOM ARRANGEMENT

(SESSION II)



Floor Plan 1



Floor Plan II

FORM FOR EXAMINING TABLE TOYS

(SESSION V)

1. Describe the toy.

2. What are the special features of this toy?

3. What might children do with this toy on their own?

4. What vocabulary and concepts could children learn from the toy with a teacher's help?

5. What new ideas can you think of for using this toy?

FORM FOR EXAMINING HOMEMADE TOYS
(SESSION VI)

1. Describe the toy.

2. How was it made?

3. What do you think it was designed to teach?

4. What would children do with the toy?

5. How many ways can you think of to use the toy?

6. How desirable is the toy?

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